

Football.

The Southern League

LUTON v. NEW BROMPTON.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Luton	3 goals.
New Brompton	1 goal.

The teams were as follow:—

Luton—Ord; Lindsay and Sharp; Hawkes, White, and Williams; Durrant, Blessington, Brown, Tierney, and Colvin.

New Brompton: Harris; Killeen and Humphreys; French, Atherton, and Blair; Scott, Frettingham, Leigh, Milward, and Dunkley.

Referee, Mr. F. Styles (Wellingborough).

Although the weather was delightfully fine on Saturday, the gate was a very disappointing one, the spectators not numbering more than 2,000. And yet the match was of an attractive kind, for New Brompton have a decent record, and are anything but a weak team. Moreover, Luton were deserving of encouragement after their Cup-tie victory of the previous week.

The fact remains, however, that the match had to be played to a forty-pound gate, a fact which shows either that money is deplorably scarce in Luton at the present moment, or that the support the Club may depend upon is not of a particularly enthusiastic or consistent character.

But there is no doubt that the attendance was considerably affected by the quite unnecessary amount of indignation which many foolish people had displayed during the two or three days preceding over circumstances which had not arisen, and in my opinion were never likely to arise, in connection with the forthcoming Cup-tie with Queen's Park Rangers. Of course, I refer to the story told as to Luton having foregone their choice of ground for a monetary consideration.

Saturday's game opened in rather a sensational manner, for play had been in progress only three or four minutes when Luton, who were showing capital form, got down the field, and Hawkes putting in a brilliant centre, Blessington obtained possession and scored with a lovely shot, against which the custodian had no chance.

This early reverse roused the visitors, and they forced the pace tremendously, and from a dangerous-looking centre, the ball went just over the bar. Luton retaliated, and to a middle by Colvin, Blessington made a big rush, but could not quite reach the ball, and Harris was able to clear. New Brompton broke away again, and after Sharp had cleared from Scott, Frettingham and Leigh went through in fine style, and Leigh headed in, but Ord cleared splendidly.

Directly after, at the other end, Brown was worrying the backs, and Killeen passed to Humphreys, who was so flustered that he missed the ball, and Durrant nipping in, sailed away with the leather at his toe, and dribbling right up to goal, easily defeated the custodian. It was very neatly done, and deserved all the applause it received.

Luton came very near adding a third point during the next few minutes, for Colvin sent the ball across, and Blessington put in a shot which Harris stopped but could not get rid of for the moment, but eventually the ball went just round the post. Durrant undertook the corner kick, and Blessington headed just by. In another attack, Colvin beat all opposition, and might easily have followed the example set a few minutes before by Durrant, but passed across the goal and nothing came of the effort.

After Blessington, receiving from a pretty touch by Durrant, had forced a corner, Williams was responsible for a fine shot, which Harris successfully negotiated. Then the visitors made a vigorous response, and for once in a way the Luton defence was found to be very rocky. Ord had to save from a grand shot by Milward, and again from a centre by Scott. The next moment Dunkley was left all to himself for just sufficient time to take deliberate aim, and his shot striking the bar, rebounded to the feet of Frettingham, who had no difficulty in putting through.

There can be no question that Frettingham was offside, because the shot came from some yards out, and when the ball rebounded, there was no one between him and the goal. Still, the visitors deserved a goal, for at this particular point they were showing much better form than the Luton team, and the only wonder is that they did not succeed in getting on level terms.

From a foul throw-in by Williams, Atherton got in a hot shot which Ord saved very smartly, and the Luton team being all at sixes and sevens, the visitors continued to press with great vigour, so that it was quite a relief when the whistle went for half-time. Just before that, Ord effected a grand clearance from an attempt by Frettingham.

The play in the second half opened none too auspiciously for Luton, for after a couple of efforts by Brown and Tierney, New Brompton got together and rattled away in ding-dong fashion. Indeed, but for the fact that Sharp showed up very conspicuously at this juncture, there is no knowing what might have happened. Four times in succession the Luton left back cleared just when things were getting critical, and his gallant defence elicited rounds of applause.

The turning point came when Tierney threaded his way bang through the Brompton defence, and though at last he shot high over, his effort seemed to serve as an inspiration to the others. They pulled themselves together in marvellous style, and for the remaining half-hour they kept up an almost incessant attack on the visitors' goal. How it escaped on several occasions is a profound mystery.

From a hot shot by Hawkes, Harris fell over with the ball, and Blessington next showed up with a couple of attempts, his first shot being just a little wide, and the second—a regular beauty—hitting the post. From a well-placed corner by Colvin, Harris cleared and Tierney put in again, whilst a moment later Brown sent just over the bar.

A weak goal-kick gave Colvin another opportunity, and he put in very nicely. The custodian punched away, and then Durrant, with a splendid chance, shot over. I am afraid it would tire the patience of readers to set down all the likely-looking shots put in. Suffice it to say, that the forwards—especially the inside men—were showing form which could scarcely have been surpassed, and if the next goal was rather long in coming, it was through no fault of theirs.

The third point did come at last. Tierney receiving from Hawkes and scoring with an oblique shot, which found its billet—after passing between the legs of a lot of players. Still Luton kept at it. A grand bit of dribbling by Blessington, who went right up the field, dodging here and dodging there, was the next feature, and ultimately he put across to Colvin, who shot wide.

Brown, who was going great guns, was repeatedly tripped, twice at any rate within the twelve yards' line, the trip on one occasion coming from behind, but the referee allowed matters to take their course, and the penalties appealed for were not forthcoming. Just before the finish, Brown wound up with a grand shot, which Harris saved against the bottom corner of the goal—a very clever save indeed.

The game altogether showed some remarkable ups and downs. As already stated, there was a period in the game when Luton were completely overplayed, and when they were leading by two goals to one, it was being pretty generally said that if they won the match they might think themselves very lucky.

But they made ample amends in the last half-hour, and on the form then shown there are very few teams that could have stood against them. Brown was in grand trim, and in passing, in dribbling, and in shooting he could scarcely have been excelled. He kept his wings together splendidly, and his display was worthy of the greatest praise.

Blessington was again in his best vein, his skill and judgment being particularly noticeable, whilst he also got over the ground at a surprising rate. Tierney, as usual, worked hard and effectively from start to finish, and Durrant and Colvin were also in fine fettle, and the play of the whole quintet was first-rate. In the half-back line, Williams was hardly up to his usual standard, but White and Hawkes both did well, and at back Sharp gave one of his best exhibitions. Ord at times had a fair amount of work, and he did it splendidly, never making the slightest mistake.

New Brompton are unquestionably a very capable team, the forwards especially showing themselves able to make the most of any weakness on the opposing side. The right wing, perhaps, was rather the more dangerous, but taking them altogether they were a well-balanced lot. The half-backs were very fair. Killeen tackled and kicked well at back, and Harris gave an unblemished display in goal.

As to the refereeing, no one could blame the whistle-holder for being unduly officious, the fact being that he very seldom interfered, and it was a fortunate thing that both the players and the spectators were on their best behaviour.

Of the other League matches, the most interesting to Luton was that in which Queen's Park Rangers were engaged with Southampton, the Saints proving victorious by a goal to nil. This shows that the Rangers will want some beating on Saturday. Watford went down before Millwall by 4 goals to 1, Swindon were beaten by Tottenham Hotspur by 3 to 1, Wellingborough were vanquished at Portsmouth by 4 to nil, Northampton succumbed at Kettering by 2 to none, and Reading beat West Ham by 3 to nil.

Dear me. They said ping-pong, and shouted hurrahs at the result of our Town Club's play on Saturday last. But wait until they have all seen the grand show of Boots and Shoes at Freeman, Hardy, and Willis, 38, George-street, Luton: 3 to 1 they will all buy a pair. Their goods are cheaper and wear better than anyone else's in the town.—[ADVT.]

The following is the League table up to date:

					Goals.		
	Pld.	Won.	Lst.	Drn.	For.	Agst.	Pts
Portsmouth	11	8	1	2	22	9	18
Reading	10	8	1	1	22	5	17
Tottenham Hotspur	10	8	1	1	24	8	17
Southampton.....	10	7	1	2	26	9	16
West Ham United	12	6	4	2	18	14	14
Luton	8	5	3	0	19	8	10
Kettering	9	4	3	2	11	8	10
Northampton.....	10	4	6	0	17	19	8
Queen's Park Rangers...	9	3	5	1	9	9	7
Millwall	16	3	6	1	15	17	7
Watford	10	3	6	1	10	24	7
Wellingborough	8	3	5	0	8	15	6
New Brompton	9	2	5	2	12	17	6
Brentford	9	1	6	2	6	16	4
Bristol Rovers	9	1	6	2	5	16	4
Swindon	10	1	8	1	6	27	3